

1914
Near East
Turkish Empire

AMERICANIZING TURKEY

By the late William T. Stead



SALONICA WITH ITS "WHITE TOWER"

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY MR. WM. T. STEAD APPEARED IN THE COLUMNS OF THE "YOUTH'S COMPANION," AND IS REPRINTED FOR THE THESSALONICA AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL OF SALONICA, MACEDONIA, BY COURTESY OF THE "YOUTH'S COMPANION."

A Note on the Thessalonica Agricultural and Industrial Institute

BY REV. JOHN HENRY HOUSE, D. D., PRINCIPAL.

THIS article by the late William T. Stead, the man of the broad vision, with its message of hope and inspiration for a new Macedonia, comes to Americans with especial significance at this time, when the results of the Balkan war, although still uncertain, must inevitably open up larger opportunities for Americans to influence and uplift the peoples of Macedonia.

The Thessalonica Agricultural Institute is now a little over eight years old. It was begun without means but has gradually grown until it has a building, which when packed, will hold fifty boys. Many applicants are turned away because of the lack of accommodations. We suppose it would be hard to find an institution with so small a budget that does as much. The amount sent by the New York treasurer last year was \$5587.86, and any one who wishes to know what was done with this budget in the various departments of agri-

culture, silk-culture, carpentry, masonry, shoe-making and tailoring, can have the report sent to him by addressing the Treasurer Wm. B. Isham, Esq., 27 William St. New York. The main stress is laid upon agriculture, and the accompanying two illustrations of grain fields will show the difference between work done by scientific culture on our fields, and unscientific on fields near by. The change from a desert-looking waste to fruitful fields which the one picture presents, shows what we are aiming at for the villages of Macedonia. The building of our brick barn, illustrates what we attempt in the masonry department, and the bright faces of our boys, showing their purpose and ability to accomplish things, is we believe, a revelation of what can be done for the rural life in Macedonia when we are equipped with means for carrying on demonstration work in the villages.

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BY THE LATE WILLIAM T. STEAD

HOW often have I wished during my visits to Turkey that Christian ministers would let the Acts of the Apostles rest for awhile, and instead tell their congregations something of the acts of the modern apostles who are laboring to-day in the very countries that enjoyed the ministry of Saint Paul! How much more interesting it would be to hear the story of the founding of the American college at Tarsus than to hear for the thousandth time of the Tarsus of Saul, who found salvation on the way to Damascus! And how much more vivid and inspiring an account of the Thessalonica Agricultural and Industrial Institute that the Americans have founded at Salonika would be, than the threadbare dissertations on the man of Macedonia, the sight of whom in a dream brought the missionary to the Gentiles nearly nineteen centuries ago to the city where Abdul-Hamid in his prison villa so long waited deliverance by death!

AMERICAN INDIFFERENCE

THE general apathy and indifference of the average educated American in Europe to the one supremely great and useful achievement of Americans in the Old World is to me almost inconceivable. Of course there are a select few who know what is being done, for otherwise the work would cease. But of the Americans I have met, I think that not one in a hundred has any realizing sense of the immense value of the work that is being done by their countrymen and countrywomen in European and Asiatic Turkey. I am not writing from the missionary point of view. I am writing as a man interested in the civilization, the education, the general uplifting of his fellow men. And I unhesitatingly affirm that when I get sick and weary over the contemplation of the mean intrigues, the squalid ambitions and the unscrupulous doings of politicians, I find an unfailing refreshment for my soul in remembering the heroic pioneer work that is being done in the dominions of the Sultan by citizens of the United States.

Great Britain, absorbed in diplomatic, naval and military affairs, has spent untold millions of dollars in propping up the political system established in the East. But to-day you look in vain for any lasting trace of good resulting from all her sacrifices. The American government, on the other hand, has spent nothing, and has accomplished nothing. But private American citizens, subscribing out of their own pockets sums that in fifty years might have equaled the amount spent to build one modern ironclad, have left in every province of the Ottoman Empire the imprint of their intelligence and of their character. Sir Edwin Pears, in his book on Turkey and its people, says :

“In a journey made a few years ago through the entire length of Roumelia from the west to the Black Sea, I found in almost every town that the houses with the conveniences of European civilization, with decent sanitary appliances and the comparative refinements to be found in English homes of the lower middle class, were those of former pupils of American schools.”

That is a small thing, although if cleanliness is next to godliness, it is not to be scoffed at ; but it is not a small thing to have laid the foundation of a new state, to have given shape to the latest aspirations of a nationality—and that is what the Americans did when they cradled the Bulgarian kingdom in the classrooms of Robert College. Even greater work than this they have done and are doing. If it is a great thing to emancipate a nationality, how much greater a thing is it to liberate a sex. The deliverance of Turkish womanhood from the darkness of ignorance and seclusion is a task far more vast than the foundation of Bulgarian independence. The work is yet in its infancy ; but it has been well begun, and the doing of it is perhaps one of the most important things that Americans are achieving in this world to-day.

On what trifles seemingly as light as air do the destinies of nations hang! Between fifty and sixty years ago the Eastern world was convulsed with war. Six nations sent their sons to fight and die in the Crimea in order to secure forever the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

While they were thus engaged, attracting the attention of the world by their alarms of war, it so happened that one fine day an American citizen named Robert saw a boat cross the Bosphorus to Scutari laden with loaves of bread that seemed to have been baked in an American oven.

Attracted by the homelike appearance of the loaves, he inquired whence they came. He was told that Mr. Hamlin, an American Missionary who kept a school at a village called Bebek, had a contract to supply Florence Nightingale's hospital with bread, and that these loaves were baked by his pupils after the American fashion.

THE PASTOR'S LOAVES

ROBERT, an American Scot from New York, sought out this pastor who was combining the supply of the bread of earth with that of the bread of heaven, liked him, and fired by his zeal and enthusiasm, gave him thirty thousand dollars with which to found an American college in Turkey.

It was only a trifling sum ; but it has produced and is producing more wide-reaching and permanent results than the thousand million dollars that the European nations were then lavishing on their armies in the Crimea. For that small endowment was like the grain of mustard-seed in the parable. In the college thus founded were reared and trained on American principles the men who twenty years afterward destroyed the integrity of the great Ottoman Empire by founding the principality, now the kingdom of Bulgaria, which is to-day the most thriving, the most advanced, and the most powerful of all the Balkan States.

There are not so many Bulgarian students in Robert College now. The men trained there have founded schools and colleges in their own country. Out of a total revenue of thirty-five million dollars, Bulgaria spends on education every year four million dollars—not a bad return for the thirty thousand dollars of American money given by Christopher Robert in 1856.



SCHOOL BOYS BUILDING THE BARN



OUR NEIGHBOR'S BARLEY FIELD, ACROSS THE ROAD FROM OURS



OUR MODEL BARLEY FIELD



THE NEW BARN COMPLETED

When the Russian soldiers returned home after the war of 1878 that liberated Bulgaria, each transport as it passed the bluff crowned by the buildings of Robert College saluted the institution without which all their heroic valor would have been of no avail. It was a well deserved tribute to one of the most useful institutions on the broad earth's surface. But how few American citizens have even so much as heard its name !

Robert College is, however, less interesting than the Ammerycolly Kuzearan, or American College for girls—formerly situated at Scutari, but now being installed at Arnaut-Köi, a magnificent site immediately behind Robert College. There, halls bearing the familiar names of Gould, Woods and Rockefeller will accommodate the girl undergraduates of the Ottoman Empire. Miss Patrick, the principal of the American College for girls, is a woman of remarkable capacity, both as a business administrator and as a teacher. She has for years been doing work of inestimable value among the women of the East.

HALIDEH HANUM

THE college began as a high school in 1871, but was chartered as a college in 1890 by the Massachusetts Legislature. At first, with a few exceptions, it educated Christian girls only, one of whom was the charming and accomplished Halideh Saleh, usually known as Halideh Hanum, or Mrs. Halideh, who entered the college in 1894 and was graduated in 1901. After the revolution, Turkish women were free to avail themselves of the college. But the college cannot accommodate more than one hundred and ninety boarders, and most of the applicants have to wait until the new building is ready, when the number of students will be raised to four hundred and thirty.

The girls of Scutari come from all parts of the Ottoman Empire, and are of all races and religions and languages. They all learn English and acquire American ideas. No one can estimate the influence that these educated girls will exercise in Europe and Asia.

The Scutari College has not only done good training hundreds of

girls ; it has set an example that the Turks are now eagerly imitating. The Sultan gave Ahmed Riza, the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, a palace. He has given it to his sister to be used as a school for Turkish girls.

When I was in Constantinople I wrote articles for the *Tanin*—the *Times* of Turkey. They were translated into Turkish by Halideh Hanum, who has long been a member of the staff of the paper. Halideh Hanum also addressed a meeting at the college, at which I was present. She is a very pretty woman, slight in figure ; she spoke with ease and effect before a mixed audience of men and women. Yet she cannot go out in the streets without a veil ; and when in the innocence of my heart I proposed to ask the translator of my articles to lunch with me at the leading hotel in Pera, I was told that no Turkish woman would ever dream of going to a hotel even in the company of her own husband.

I have made special mention of Robert College and the women's college because I have visited both more than once. They are at the

center of the empire and stand at the head of their class. But they are only the best types of many other similiar institutions that are diffusing culture throughout the length and breadth of the Ottoman Empire. The Americans brought the first printing-press into Turkey. An American first compiled a grammar for the Albanians. The American Bible Society and the American Board of Foreign Missions have for half a century developed the mind and trained the conscience of tribes whose very names are unknown in the United States. It is an inspiring sight merely to look at the map of the Ottoman Empire that shows the stations of the American missions. The whole map is dotted with red spots, and every one of these red spots is as a pharos of intelligence, a lighthouse from whose lofty tower rays of culture stream into the darkest regions of the earth.

In Asia Minor alone there are now four hundred and fifty schools founded by Americans, on American principles and controlled by American managers. In these schools there are to-day nearly twenty-five thousand students, six thousand of whom are in the five colleges

in which American professors are training men and women to face and solve the problems of the world in the true American spirit. It is not too much to say that the only infusion of the ideas of Western civilization into these Eastern races has come not from Great Britain or Germany, but from America.

The American colleges are all religious institutions, but no attempt is made to proselytize; and as W. E. Curtis said in his interesting book, "Around the Black Sea," representatives of fifteen races and five religions regularly attend service at Robert College. The Jewish and Moslem students are often among the most punctual in their attendance at these Christian prayers.

An illuminating little anecdote illustrates the influence of American thought upon the Eastern mind. When I was a boy, Jacob Abbot's books were among the treasures of our library. Nowadays I do not know any one who reads, "Beechnut," "Stuyvesant," and the other stories of my boyhood. Indeed I had myself almost forgotten Jacob Abbot's name when suddenly I was startled by hearing from

Sir W. Ramsay that my friend Halideh Hanum had translated Jacob Abbot's book, "The Mother in the home," into Turkish for the instruction of Turkish mothers. Still more startling, Halideh Hanum was actually decorated by the ex-Sultan, Abdul Hamid, for her services to the women of his empire in translating Abbot's book.

A wide field for prophetic speculation is opened by the thought of American influence on these Eastern minds. Robert College graduates made Bulgaria possible. American mission schools have played a great part in the national awakening among the Armenians. If there had only been more American schools in Albania and Macedonia, the solution of the most difficult problem in the East of Europe would not appear so hopeless as it is to-day.





ONE OF OUR MULBERRY GROVES, WITH MAIN BUILDING BEYOND